

Big Sky Libraries

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Montana State Library [MSL]

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Commissioner's Corner

Thanks to Our Legislators!

David Johnson, Chair

With less than one-half of Montana's legislative session remaining, it appears that our public libraries have fared reasonably well. Many of the bills we support appear close to enactment, while others of concern have fallen by the wayside. Although we must continue to keep abreast of developments, we want to publicly thank all of the legislators who have been supportive, including:

- Senator Lorents Grosfield of Big Timber, for sponsoring SB149, the library district law, and Representative Cindy Younkin of Bozeman for managing the bill in the House.
- Representative Bob Lawson of Whitefish, the sponsor of the library federation clarification bill, HB130, and Senator John Bohlinger of Billings, a strong supporter in the Senate.
- Representative Robert R. Story, Jr. of Park City, the sponsor of HB124, "the big bill" who chaired the select-committee that approved the amendments leaving the powers of library boards "as is."
- To all of the legislators casting favorable votes or making favorable comments for the Montana State Library's budget, including permanent funds for the periodical database program, and increased funding for NRIS (Natural Resources Information System).

Keep in mind that those who are toiling in the legislative arena need your continued help, so please call your representatives when the word goes out that they need your support!

Calendar

For more information on these and other Montana Library events, visit our web calendar:

<http://msl.state.mt.us/calendar.html>

April 11 - MSL Commission Meeting - MSL Conference Room - Helena

April 25-28 - MLA Conference - Kalispell, Outlaw Inn.

June 20 - MSL Commission Meeting - MSL Conference Room - Helena

June 10-15 - Summer Institute 2001 - Small Public Library Management, Butte - Montana Tech

August 9 - MSL Commission Meeting - Lincoln County Library - Libby

A Word From Our State Librarian

At their April meeting, the Commission will consider five staff recommendations regarding the Library Services Advisory Council and MSL's task forces:

1. Allow the executive order, which created the Library Services Advisory Council, to expire.
2. Add a seat on the Networking Task Force (NTF) for a person with disabilities and reappoint a library user.
3. Disband the Library Law Revision Task Force (LRTF).
4. Establish a task force to review state aid to public libraries.
5. Continue the practice of appointing ad-hoc committees to guide special projects; such as the certification committee and the group of trustees, and librarians that helped us create the new trustee manual.

The former federal library act, LSCA, mandated that state libraries establish an advisory council; the new act, LSTA, passed in 1996, does not. Even though the council was not required, the Commission agreed to continue the council's existence. However, the work of the council has changed dramatically during the past years. This change has been primarily due to the transition from a sub-grant LSTA program to one that is building statewide projects. Therefore, the council's work, which was once reviewing grant proposals and making funding recommendations to the Commission, has significantly decreased.

In 1997, the Commission appointed two task forces to advise staff and the Commission on certain library issues. These groups have produced many benefits for Montana library communities. The staff recommends that the NTF continue to act as an advisory board to the Montana Library Network. However, since the LRTF has reached many of its goals, staff recommends that the Commission disband it.

One issue left from the LRTF is changing and increasing the amount of state aid to public libraries. Governor Racicot approved one part of the task force's recommendation for a four-part state aid package, however, due to the state's budget woes, Governor Martz did not include this in her budget. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission appoint a group to carry this work forward.

These recommendations are meant to insure broad and diverse participation in policy-making at MSL. Although the recommendation to disband the Council may seem contrary to this principle, other groups have been formed to ensure that MSL and the library community are partners in making decisions about library services in Montana. We are very interested in your opinions about these potential actions. If you wish to comment, please contact any Commission member or send comments to me before April 11, 2001. [kstrege@state.mt.us or MSL, PO Box 201800, Helena MT 59620-1800. A list of Commissioners is online at <http://msl.state.mt.us/admin/Commission/comlist.html>.]



2001 MONTANA REGRANT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Guidelines and application forms are now available online for the 2001 Montanaiana Regrant Program (MRP) at: http://montanalibraries.org/Montanaiana_Regrant/Montanaiana.htm. Applications will be accepted from any official library or library/museum cooperative in the state.

MRP, which is funded by LSTA grant funds, will award a maximum of \$5,000 per project to make special Montana resources/materials available through the Montana Library Network [MLN]. Projects selected for funding will be chosen based on the importance of the Montana materials described in the project and the ability of the proposed project to meet MLN requirements and standards for digital materials. MLN staff are available to help all interested libraries in planning their Montanaiana project and in preparing the application. The deadline for applications is May 15, 2001. Projects will be selected and announced in late June.

Contact Bruce Newell, MLN, at 406-444-9816 or bnewell@state.mt.us.

MSL Evaluation

As required by the Institution of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the State Library will measure its progress toward meeting its five-year plan goals. The scope of the project includes a thorough evaluation of the Library Development Department, the Montana Talking Books Library, and the Montana Library Network. It also includes a brief evaluation of the Library Information Services Department and Natural Resource Information System, which have recently adopted long-range plans.

Responses to a Request for Proposal were evaluated in February by the advisory council and MSL staff, who chose Himmel and Wilson from Wisconsin. Ethel Himmel and Bill Wilson [<http://www.execpc.com/himmel>] have many years experience working in libraries and as library consultants. The evaluators were impressed by their latest publication "The Functions and Roles of State Library Agencies," and a 1998 study on the Arkansas State Library [<http://www.execpc.com/himmel/ARFinal.htm>].

The evaluation will include a review of pertinent documents, followed by a series of focus groups and individual interviews throughout the state during the second week of May. Focus groups will have 12 to 15 participants from the library community. In April, MSL will send invitations to participants selected to represent library types and constituencies throughout Montana. Focus groups will be held in Miles City, Billings, Butte, Polson, Great Falls, and Wolf Point. Focus groups for the Montana Talking Books Library will be held in Billings and Helena. Himmel and Wilson plan to augment the data collected in these groups with surveys and interviews.

The Commission will receive the evaluation report at its August meeting and it will form the nucleus of a new strategic plan for MSL. State Librarian Karen Strege said, "I am looking forward to working with Bill and Ethel on this important project. I am eager to learn how the library community judges our current services and what the community would like us to do in the next five years."

Montana Public Libraries Ranking On Key Measures

Measure:	Montana	U.S.*	MT Rank
Library visits per capita	3.57	4.13	32
Reference transactions per capita	0.63	1.12	41
Circulation transactions per capita	5.91	6.6	32
Interlibrary loans received per 1,000 population	44.18	47.35	19
Book & serials volumes per capita	2.96	2.83	23
Audio materials per 1,000 population	46.99	104.75	44
Video materials per 1,000 population	42.11	58.49	33
Current serial subscriptions per 1,000 population	6.68	7.5	27
Total income per capita	16.03	24.48	40
State income per capita	0.4	2.97	39
Local Income per capita	13.91	19	36
Other Income per capita	1.33	2.28	36
Total operating expenditures per capita	13.42	22.88	45
Total collections expenditures per capita	1.72	3.48	48
Total staff expenditures per capita	8.11	14.71	45
Salaries & wages expenditures per capita	6.79	11.97	45

* Includes the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Source: FY'97 data from the Federal-State Cooperative System of the U.S. Dept. of Education and the Montana Public Library Annual Report of Statistics.

MSL at MLA

Wednesday, April 25

1:00 to 4:00 "Accounting Skills Made Easy," Diane Gunderson, with Sandi Boardman, Blaine County Clerk & Recorder

Thursday, April 26

8:30 to 10:00 "Natural Resource Information on the WWW," Duane Anderson

1:00 to 2:00 "Technology Aspirins," Bob Cooper with Kathy Mora

Friday, April 27

8:30 to 10:00 "Montana State Library Update," Karen Strege

Saturday, April 28

8:30 to 10:00 "Montana's Digital Library," Bruce Newell

MSL Commission News



Mary Doggett, MSL
Commissioner
1989-2001

Retiring Commissioners

Please join us at the Montana State Library at 2:00 p.m. on April 11 as the Commission and MSL staff bid a fond farewell to Mary Doggett of White Sulphur Springs, and Michael Schulz of Dillon. Governor Martz and the Commissioner of Higher Education are invited



Michael Schulz, MSL
Commissioner 1990-2001

guests to this informal reception at MSL. Mary has served on the Commission since 1989 and Mike Schulz has served for 11 years.

David Johnson, Chair of the Commission, said, "It has been a real pleasure for me to have had the opportunity to serve with Mike and Mary on the Commission. They each have devoted many volunteer hours toward the goal of improving Montana libraries. We look forward to their continued support of our mission and goals."

Karen Strege, State Librarian, commented, "Mike worked hard to realize his vision of MSL becoming a catalyst and leader for all Montana libraries. His leadership has culminated in multi-type federations and the Montana Library Network. I will miss Mike's ability to think creatively, his good will to all, and his ability to coax a group of shy people to sing." She added, "Mary was always ready to embrace new challenges and new programs for Montana's libraries. Mary has led the Commission in looking for ways to serve the smallest of the state's libraries and made sure that the State Library never lost focus on the needs of the majority of our public libraries."



Linda McCulloch, new
Director of the
Office of Public
Instruction

Linda McCulloch, the new Superintendent of Public Instruction, will take her place on the Commission. Cheri Bergeron, who has represented OPI for several years, will continue to serve as OPI's alternate.

Summer Institute 2001

MSL's second Summer Institute is scheduled for the week of June 10, 2001, to be held on the campus of Montana Tech University. The Institute presents an intense week of training to 50 public library directors and staff from around the state. The Summer Institute is funded with LSTA grant funds that are administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the MSL Commission.

Grant money is used to pay all training expenses, accommodations in the dorm, and meals at the Tech Student Union for the week. Applications to attend the Institute will be mailed to all public library directors in late March, so watch for this information and plan to join us for a great week of learning and networking in Butte.

Trustee Handbook

The new *Montana Public Library Trustee Handbook* will be available for the first time at the Montana Library Association [MLA] Conference in Kalispell in late April. Each public library will receive seven copies for board members to use while they are serving as trustees. An electronic version of the handbook will also be available on the MSL web site in early May.

If you are attending the MLA conference please contact Diane Gunderson [1-800-338-5087 or dgunderson@state.mt.us] to arrange to pick up the handbooks for your public library at the MSL booth. If no one from your library attends the conference, copies of the handbook will be mailed out following the MLA meeting.

Commission reception at MLA Conference

The MSL Commission invites you to their annual MLA conference reception on Friday, April 27, at 5:45 p.m. in the hallway adjacent to the Stagecoach Room at the Outlaw Inn. This event precedes the membership dinner. The Commission will provide hors d'oeuvres and there will be a cash bar. The event provides a chance to meet and talk with the Commissioners in an informal and friendly setting.

Computer Purchase Guidance for Libraries

With the development of the Montana Library Network (MLN) and the overall increased demand placed on library computers, it is vital that libraries obtain equipment that can handle necessary tasks effectively and efficiently. Slow computers operating older software will prove increasingly problematic to libraries attempting to share resources and access information in the digital, technologically-demanding environment we have embraced. As MLN continues to develop access to an expanding range of content-rich electronic resources, libraries need to be able to run faster, more advanced browsers and other applications.

Recently, when several Montana libraries wanted to purchase new computers, they asked MSL for purchasing guidance. While the needs of individual libraries vary, MSL staff will help libraries by recommending a minimum computer configuration. These recommendations will be available via the MLN Website home page (<http://montanalibraries.org>) and reviewed quarterly for necessary updates.

The Montana State Library recommends the following **minimum** configuration for libraries purchasing new computer workstations during March-June, 2001:

Microprocessor: Intel® Pentium® III 800/133MHz or
AMD® Athlon 850/200MHz

Case: Minitower

Hard Disk Drive: 30 GB Ultra ATA 66 7200rpm Hard
Drive

Monitor: 17 Inch Color Monitor (capable of 1024 x 768
resolution and .26 dot pitch)

RAM Memory: 128 MB SDRAM

Video: 16MB AGP 4X Graphics

Audio: SoundBlaster Compatible Audio

Floppy Drive: 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive

CD-ROM Drive: 48X CD-ROM Drive

Operating System: Microsoft Windows 2000
Professional SP1

Office Suite: Microsoft Office 2000 Professional SR1

Web Browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or later

Mouse: Two Button Mouse

Keyboard: 101 key Keyboard

Modem: V.90 56K PCI Modem

Network Interface Card: Standard 10/100Mbps PCI
Ethernet

Ports: 2 USB

Montana Certification Program

Congratulations to the following library directors and library staff members who were certified through the *Montana Certification Program* as of April 01, 2001:

Enrollment Applicants:

Abrams, Vera M. — Baker
Browning, Tricia L. — White Sulphur
Springs

Brug, Sandra G. — Bozeman
Carter, Gwen — Great Falls
Chaberek, Guna K. — Superior
Clark, Carole Ann — Great Falls
Cowan, Virginia — Bozeman
Dalzell, Jackie — Ekalaka
Donath, Carolyn S. — Conrad
Giono, Angela — Townsend
Gnam, Renee — Whitefish
Goodmundson, Phyllis M. — Dutton
Habets, Barbara — Conrad
Haymaker, Heidi — Great Falls
Kegel, Sara — Great Falls
Kern, Virginia — Billings
Leifer, Marian J. — Fairfield

Martin, Susan C. — Forsyth
McCann, Susan O. — Philipsburg
McKeen, Sandra — Kalispell
Meier, Irene — Great Falls
Mizee, Carol A. — Kalispell
Van Setten, Dina — Choteau
Wandler, Nancy M. — Stevensville
Wight, Kathy — Great Falls
Wilckens, Maria — Great Falls

New Applicants:

Adams, Lenore — Helena
Brookie, Janeen — Malta
Devaney, Beverly — Harlem
Dyke, Carol — Baker
Erickson, Mary Ann — St. Ignatius
Foote, Patsy — Superior
Freburg, Nancy — Winnett
Gagnon, Julie — Chester
Heser, Cheryl — Forsyth

Johnson, Bridgett — Lewistown
Kositzky, Joey — Whitefish
McMullen, Lauren — Big Timber
Nicola, Verna — Belt
Patton, Jean — Hot Springs
Pawlowski, Joan — Circle
Prokop, Emma — Three Forks
Randall, Al — Troy
Roberts, Katherine — Thompson Falls
Schreiber, Kathleen A. — Harlowton
Smith, Clara J. — Jordan
Varland, Janet — Augusta
Zack, Marilyn — Kalispell

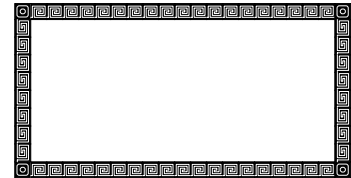
Renewal Applicants:

Kearney, Elizabeth — West Yellowstone
Meissner, Mary B. — Fort Benton
Nagle, Gail — Glendive
Stacy, Deena — Columbia Falls
Watts, Nancy — Lewistown

For a certification manual or questions contact: Diane Gunderson, 1-800-338-5087, dgunderson@state.mt.us.



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Karen Strege, State Librarian

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T.J. Abbenhaus, NRIS GIS
Programmer/Analyst.

Spotlight: T.J. Abbenhaus, NRIS GIS Programmer/Analyst

T.J. Abbenhaus works for the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) as a GIS programmer/analyst. He and his wife Shauna expect their first child in June. In the past year, they have become adept with real estate transactions, having bought and sold the same house in the same year.

In the early 1990s, T.J. worked as an Outward Bound instructor for three years, after which he became a river guide and a member of the ski patrol. During this time he met a beautiful woman named Shauna who, according to T.J., "had me running in circles, all the while I thought I was running away," (think of John Lyons' horse training methods). During their courtship, T.J. spent summers guiding raft trips in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. Shauna and he married in June 1996 in Alaska.

Then T.J. began graduate work in Geography/Cartography at the University of Montana. At the same time, he worked for Missoula County's Office of Planning and Grants and the O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West. There he honed his skills as a GIS/Analyst, programming economic data using Visual Basic, Map Objects, and Active Server Pages.

Shauna and T.J. are outdoors people, who love horses, dogs, and most animals. During the summer they raft and rock climb as much as possible. In the winter, they enjoy cross-country and alpine skiing. Though neither T.J. nor Shauna were born in Montana, they both have family roots here. T.J.'s grandfather, Charles O. Shelton, lived in Teton County as a child and raised his family in Helena and Choteau before moving to Washington State.